



INDIANA COMMISSION  
HIGHER *for* EDUCATION

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Cheryl Orr

317-464-4400 x19 (office)

317-319-5907 (cell)

# Commission Concerned About High Number of Hoosiers Failing to Access Available Money for College

*New, major efforts launched to connect Indiana families to millions available in financial aid*

Expressing concern that more than 150,000 Hoosiers missed Indiana's March 10 deadline last year to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which cuts off their ability to receive any state financial assistance for college, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is launching two new efforts to help Indiana families file the FAFSA on-time.

In keeping with the Commission's Reaching Higher strategic plan, the efforts announced today are designed to ensure that Indiana students can afford to attend and complete college. With the current economic climate, the Commission anticipates that the number of Hoosiers needing tuition assistance will continue to increase.

Last year, the federal government gave out \$83 billion in college financial aid. In addition, Indiana provided more than \$233.5 million in state financial aid (nearly 73,000 grants). To access state college financial aid, a student must file the FAFSA by March 10.

"Failing to file the FAFSA cuts off all chances for state or federal aid," noted Jon Costas, Commission chair and mayor of Valparaiso. "Missing the March 10 FAFSA deadline means many Hoosiers are leaving money for college on the table."

Hoosiers, who failed to file on-time last year, would have qualified for more than \$230 million in state financial aid. The Commission's efforts are targeted at providing step-by-step instructions to help Hoosier families complete the FAFSA on time. Those new efforts are:

- **Online step-by-step FAFSA Videos**, available at [www.learnmoreindiana.org/cashforcollege](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/cashforcollege), provide easy-to-understand instructions for completing the FAFSA. Seven short videos walk students and families through each section of the FAFSA and provide answers to commonly asked questions. The website also provides additional information on paying for college.
- **The first ever "FAFSA Friday"** will be held on February 27 at [www.learnmoreindiana.org/FAFSAFriday](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/FAFSAFriday). This one last push will give families the opportunity to get additional help filling out the FAFSA before the March 10 deadline. Learn More Indiana will host the statewide financial aid webinar with the help of IHETS Interactive. During the event, college financial aid advisors will be available via live chat between the hours of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. to answer questions pertaining to the FAFSA.

"We are concerned about the high number of families who file late," said Marilyn Moran-Townsend, Commission member from the Fort Wayne area. "We also believe there are many families who don't file at all – either because the

form looks too complicated or they think they won't qualify for aid. That's why the new resources to help families complete the FAFSA are so important."

The Commission also noted that Hoosiers can order a free publication, *Indiana's Guide to Paying for College: Step-by-Step Tips to Help High School Seniors Apply for Financial Aid*, by calling 1-800-992-2076 or visiting [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org).

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**About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education:** The Commission for Higher Education is the state's coordinating agency for higher education. For additional information, go to [www.che.in.gov](http://www.che.in.gov).

**About Learn More Indiana:** Learn More Indiana is providing information in print, in person, through partnerships and on the web to help Hoosiers get to and through college. Learn More Indiana is a partnership of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana, with additional support from Indiana's colleges and universities, USA Funds, Lumina Foundation for Education, and US DOE College Access Challenge Grant—all working together to provide information that supports learning. For additional information, go to [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org).